

us away, and all who paid for us, and all who took the trouble to see about us."

A girl ends her letter: "I hope you are enjoying yourself like I enjoyed myself. God bless you dear Madam. I hope I am Your Friend, A. B."

It is worthy of notice that there was only one postscript, and it was written by a girl. I quote it in full:

"Apples is ripe."

HARRIET SMEETON.

With reference to the article dealing with letters written by children of the Children's Country Holidays Fund, we are asked by its Chairman of Committee, Mrs. Barnett, to express the Committee's gratitude for the help given by ex-students of the House of Education. In many instances these have conducted Nature Rambles for the children before they went on their holiday, and in some few instances Talks were also given by them to groups of children collected in the various London schools. The Committee would be most grateful for further help in this direction in the coming year. Any ex-students whose posts are in or near London, and who would be able to have the children down to the country for Rambles, or to conduct them in the suburbs of London, or in any way to help forward the work of the Nature Study and Recreation Committee, are asked to communicate with the Secretary, Miss PHILP, 18, Buckingham Street, Strand. The keenness of the children, as shewn by the quotations in the article referred to, fully repays any efforts made to make the children's holiday fuller both of interest and enjoyment.

## A NATURE WALK IN WINTER.

There could hardly be a better place than Filey Bay for getting broad notions of geology, for in the four or five miles between the White Rocks, near Flamborough Head on the south, and Filey Brigg on the north, at least three different layers of earth are exposed: chalk, clay, and a stratified rock, given as calcareous grit in the guide book.

The plane of these formations slopes gently up towards the north and also towards the west, an inclination that is not only evident in a single prominent slab of the Brigg, but is also the general tendency of the whole of Great Britain, where the oldest rocks come to the surface in the north of Scotland and in Wales.

"Yorkshire people are proud to know that the finest and loftiest cliffs of the chalk formation in all England are to be met with in their county at Speeton and Bempton. There the cliffs, composed wholly of chalk, present a perpendicular wall of rock some 400 feet"!

Thither I went along the sands at low tide. The southern limit of my walk was where the naked chalk first appeared, rising sheer above the slopes of earth and pebbles, made, doubtless, by debris from the cliffs. Such marks of stratification as are visible in the chalk show the same slope up towards the west. The shore is a beach of chalk pebbles. There are a few much larger rocks coloured like the Brigg. But the tide does not set in a direction that would bring boulders thence, and a comparison with other fragments convinced me that they were chalk, discoloured by long submergence, and eaten out by the sea and the mussels, acorn barnacles, and *purpuræ* which covered them. I could find no rock-boring shells such as I have seen near Beachy Head, in chalk reefs. There were veins of something crystalline, which I thought ought to be flint, but which looked more like quartz. Fragments of it helped to form the beach. The fringe of chalk pebbles at high-water mark continued across part of the next layer above the chalk, which is a black clay,

much like the kimmeridge clay in the Isle of Purbeck, except that portions of a very red clay are intermixed. While I was looking forward to the junction of this clay with the red boulder clay, which forms the greater part of the cliffs round Filey Bay, and thinking that I saw one of the frequent gullies running down to the sea at the very spot, I noticed a hard black stone at my feet, veined with most lovely crystals. This sign of heat and contortion made me observe that the black cliffs had become hard and shaly, that the strata were bent into beautiful vandykes, some planes being thus absolutely at right angles to the general plane described above. This marked crumpling gave way to rippling curves, and the shale dipped down to meet the red marl or clay in a way that made one think there must be a fault at that spot.

The effect of water is very conspicuous on the red clay. After heavy rain large portions of the cliff fall away, leaving clean surfaces exposed, and lie below to be washed away gradually by the tides. The streams form muddy deltas of the soft clay, and these are often heaped over with sand, and, I suppose, help to stem the tide, and thus protect the cliffs from which they have been washed.

Farther north than the town, the carving out of valleys by water, and the denudation of peaks and slopes is exemplified in perfection.

The northern boundary of the bay is a promontory of boulder clay, based on, and gradually sloping down to the level of the mighty slabs of rock which run out to sea, and form the natural breakwater of the Brigg. The Brigg is covered at high tide, and wears into innumerable little holes and pits from the friction of the waves. The rock is full of fossils, ammonites, and various bivalves. Beyond the Brigg the coast line turns westward and so faces north. The rise of the markedly stratified rocks is very visible in the cliffs, until, in the distance, they look as if ruled with parallel lines, a bright yellow band running round them some way below the surface. Not having geological maps and books within reach, I must correct my observations later on.

A. C. D.

## A MID-WINTER SUMMER.

The 22nd December, in a cold which might be felt and seen, the special Riviera Excursion left Charing Cross at 2-50, nominally—it actually got away about 3-15, after a breathless and polyglot pandemonium. The station in its present shored up condition was much too small for the 600 people *and* their little bags gathered on one platform—it seemed to breed little bags, for there were always more every time one looked! The crossing was icy, and the boat took the unusual course from Folkstone to Calais; thus one schoolboy assured his still smaller schoolgirl sister we were certain to be run down as we should have to cross all the Channel traffic slantwise! We did see numerous light ships and the whole fishing fleet riding at anchor, but nothing more alarming.

The arrival at Calais was a deadly, silent fight; each man of the 600 meant to be off that boat first, and to get a corner seat. However, once in the train we settled down peacefully for the night, turned on the hot air, and went out to dinner in our gorgeous restaurant car; "dinner" was in five "shifts," the first at 7-30, the last was still going on at 10-30! We woke somewhere between Maçon and Lyons to discover that every drop of water on the train was frozen hard, that there had never been such a night, that the train was two hours late, being quite exhausted by the struggle to keep alight and going. There was despair all up and down the corridors when it was impossible to wash before breakfast!

First, breakfast at 6-30 was a welcome feast, raging hot coffee had never tasted so good! It then took us *two hours* to thaw a little peep hole in the solid ice on the windows through which to see out. But the sun came out and helped, and at last we could see the mountains and the Rhone, and then at last Valence, with William's Tower on the hill above, reminding us of Aucassin and his beloved Nicolette, and how "we sing and say and the story is told." There, too, towers up the great proscenium wall of the Roman

theatre, still imposing and existant when almost all others have perished.

Oh, 'twas a woful sight from the windows—the hapless little vines in frozen floods up to their necks; the cabbages in the tiny clearings among the foot hills all frozen and pinched; the tentative olives pitifully bowing their heads.

We got to Avignon at lunch time. There was practically no water in the Rhone, and the shallow edges were frozen, and the new "Pont" looked more futile and undanceable than ever. It was a relief to look at the great sullen palace and remember that it is no longer to be a barrack. We got a glimpse of Arles and its aqueducts, gates, and amphitheatres, and then came the horrid wilderness of the "Crau." The shepherds, in huge earth-yellow cloaks, watched over the lambs, and the wind raged and ramped across the flat and stony waste on which vast herds of sheep had been gathered. The railway is protected with a line of cypresses now, because the mistral in a rage pushed the train over one day, and frequently used to bring it to a panting standstill!

The inlets of the "Bouches de Rhone" looked very grey and still; not yet were they flooded with colour, nor did the yellow genesta and the pink almond and peach blaze along their shores. Gradually we thawed and warmed and expanded as we crept along to Toulon; and the first heather we saw out was an event, and jonquils growing beneath the vines were a miracle. But all too soon the islands of the Pheasants (on which lives the wisest old witch still alive "on-dit") faded out, and all the glories of the coast were hidden, and we crept out to tea in the car, unspeakably smutty and weary. The school-children, whose own special train it is, had all made friends by this time and were dashing up and down the corridors and exchanging stamps—all except two who had artfully managed to get left behind in Paris to the awe and amazement of the others. And so at last, four hours late, we crept into Cannes about 7-30, too tired to notice anything except the Sabbatical hush which the new "*repos de dimanche*" has brought about—it might have been a Scotch town, all was so quiet and decorous.

And then—every day and all day floods of sunshine. True there were frosts at night, and the cardinal lobelias which had been flourishing in the garden died before them,

but there were always roses. Five sorts of palm trees and a coruba (St. John the Baptist's Locust) and a prickly pear and a bamboo grove made the garden a treasure house small though it were.

We visited one garden where huge bushes of Beauté Inconstant roses in full flower adorned the great green lawns (lawns are a rarity, only the great can afford them, as grass always dies in the summer, so all lawns are bordered with "blue-eyed grass"); heliotrope and bouganvella were festooning everything, and huge bushes of lavender and verbena attracted the bees, while a red admiral and a small tortoiseshell and a humming-bird hawk moth were flitting about.

One day we went up the Grand Pin hill, along the canal and up to the observatory; it was a thrilling as well as a beautiful walk. The canal path was (just occasionally) strutting out across a sheer gulf on a narrow wall—water one side and a drop of 250 feet the other! We had to jump the canal at one point, well knowing that if we tumbled in we had still got to drink that water afterwards as there is no other! We passed underneath a Ligurian camp on a little pine-crowned hill, made to resist Cæsar before Rome had made this land "*the province*." On the way up we passed Lentisk bushes and cistuses not yet in flower, and found burnet saxifrage and rosemary and the quaintest little brown arums, and cassia with its golden balls drooping from the little trees. At last after wild scramblings over the mica schist and granite hill side we came out on the top and saw the vast view. Looking seaward, to our right lay and basked the red porphyry Esterels, and beyond, grey and faintly menacing, the mountains of the Moors, whence the Saracen galleys used to come and harry all the land. Right below was the old town with its watch tower and Church for the sailor folk, and the great white modern harbour at its feet. Out to sea lay the the Isles des Lerins—St. Marguerite white before us and St. Honorat, with its spire pointing to heaven, behind. How hard we tried to persuade ourselves that we could *just* see Corsica on the horizon, but a snow squall (we were panting in the sun) was passing out to sea from the Alps, and hid even the far-off imagined peak.

Then we turned our backs to the sea, and the line of hills

on which we stood neatly cut the view in two for us. To our right on the coast lay "Antiopolis" of the Greeks, Phœnicians, and Romans—Antibes of modern France, which cares so little that it has just demolished the town's ancient walls. Beyond, crouched beneath the mountains, lay Nice, its blatant vulgarity softened by distance. Behind, over all, the Maritimes Alpes, white, frowning, snow-clad, and on the lower slopes here and there a village, like St. Jeannet on its plateau-like shelf.

To the left lay the limestone mountains, with the sheer gorge where the Loup breaks through just in front of us, and to the left the precipice beneath which flows the Siagne parting the Grasse Mountains from the Esterel, and marking the place where the road creeps up and round to Aix. In the middle lay Grasse, the scent city, and behind it Napoleon's plateau, where he halted his army in that last wonderful prelude to the 100 days, still as it were almost in sight of his native Corsica.

In the middle distance little Mougins sat on its hill; small though it is it had already managed a riot on the Church question. And there, too, was the Cyprus Avenue of Notre Dame des Anges, where the sad and weary climb to leave their votive offerings.

Having in true "Home Education" fashion "visualized" the view, we came down again by the Caleornie Zigzag—most wonderful piece of French engineering. Another day, of course a lovely day, saw us up in Grasse bound for the Gorge du Loup. We drove along the Corniche road past cottages where clothes horses covered with orange peel stood outside drying, to be made into curaçoa! Arrived beneath the magnificent railway viaduct, which if it were but Roman, all the world would flock to see, we took to our feet and went along by the side of the stream—Sweden Bridge stream on a grander scale. Upon our left at the top of its 700 feet high cliff is perched the village of Gourdon, from whence came all the Scotch Gordons, and underneath which grow some very rare aspleniums. The valley had preserved a wonderful supply of summer flowers—cuckoo flower, marigold, borage, broom, stork's bill, and nettle-leaved bellflower were all met on the way! Then at last we turned a sharp corner, and behold *the fall*; it leaps down from the top of the right-hand

cliff a sheer 400 feet. The spray has worn out a great hollow cavern behind, half-way up which is a narrow shelf, on which level the path continues, and where there is a small inn. You reach that point by a staircase made of packing-case tops and fenced in by rabbit wire! However, trying as this was we were rewarded; the back of the hollow was lined with maiden-hair fern!

The last day, a day of summer heat, when the Mediterranean was purple, we went over to the Islands—the true cradle of British Christianity, for there St. Cuthbert, St. Patrick, and St. Gregory were all trained. The monks are still left there in spite of laws and tumults, and we were shown over the fortified monastery, whither they used to flee from the Saracens, by a sweet and smiling boy in brown gown, bare feet, and tonsured head. This fort stands out with its feet in the water, and its internal cloisters have Roman pillars inscribed with Constantine's name.

All too soon the doom went forth for our return. As the train swept round the corner of the mountains our last glimpse in the dying sunlight was of this fortress, bathed in light—Christianity triumphant over time and tides, still vigilant, still watching over mankind.

And so back to renewed winter after a glimpse of paradise, for which let us return devout thanks.

R. A. P.